

REMARKS

Applicant concurrently files herewith a Request for Continued Examination (RCE), and corresponding RCE fee.

Claims 1-20 are all of the claims presently pending in the application. Claims 1 and 11 have been amended to more particularly define the claimed invention.

It is noted that the claims amendments are made only for more particularly pointing out the invention, and not for distinguishing the invention over the prior art, narrowing the claims, or for any statutory requirements of patentability. Further Applicant specifically states that no amendment to any claim herein should be construed as a disclaimer of any interest in or right to an equivalent of any element or feature of the amended claim.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's indication that claims 6, 12, 14-16 and 19 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant submits, however, that all of claims 1-20 are allowable.

Claims 1, 3, 5, 7-11, 13, 17, 18 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Arisaka (U.S. Patent No. 6,511,273). Claims 2 and 4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Arisaka in view of Japanese Patent Publication No. JP 2002-106519 (hereinafter "JP '519").

These rejections are respectfully traversed below.

I. THE CLAIMED INVENTION

The claimed invention of exemplary claim 1, provides a retaining protruding piece, which extends from a side portion thereof opposite to a protruding portion of the split flange and engages with a corresponding side portion of the shaft portion, formed on the side leg portions, wherein the retaining protruding piece includes a pawl portion extending from an end of the retaining protruding piece (e.g., see Application at Figures 3 and 4; paragraph [0021]). This combination of features is important for providing a clip in which the side leg portions can be reliably held in a closed state (see Application at page 6, lines 6-8).

II. THE PRIOR ART REJECTIONS

A. The Arisaka Reference

The Examiner alleges that Arisaka teaches the claimed invention of claims 1, 3, 5, 7-11, 13, 17, 18 and 20. Applicant submits, however, that Arisaka does not teach or suggest each and every feature of the claimed invention.

That is, Arisaka does not teach or suggest “*said retaining protruding piece comprising a pawl portion extending from an end of said retaining protruding piece*”, as recited in claim 1.

The Examiner attempts to rely on Figures 3-33 of Arisaka to support her allegations. The Examiner, however, is clearly incorrect.

That is, nowhere in these figures (nor anywhere else for that matter) does Arisaka teach or suggest a retaining protruding piece, which extends from a side portion thereof opposite to a protruding portion of the split flange and engages with a corresponding side portion of the shaft portion, formed on the side leg portions, wherein the retaining protruding

piece includes a pawl portion extending from an end of the retaining protruding piece.

Indeed, nowhere does Arisaka even mention a pawl portion formed on the protruding piece.

The Examiner alleges that Figures 8, 9 and 29 of Arisaka depict a pawl portion extending from an end of the protruding piece. The Examiner, however, is clearly incorrect.

Indeed, Arisaka merely discloses that when “the spindle 14 of the pin 13 is further pushed down, the stopper protrusions 19 formed on the inner faces of the half barrels 17 fit into the grooves 14a formed near the tip of the spindle 14” (see Arisaka at column 6, lines 46-49). Arisaka merely teaches that the stopper protrusions (19) engage the grooves (14a). Arisaka does not teach or suggest pawl portions extending from an end of the retaining protruding piece.

Therefore, Applicant submits that Arisaka does not teach or suggest each and every feature of the claimed invention. Therefore, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

B. The JP ‘519 Reference

The Examiner alleges that Arisaka would have been combined with JP ‘519 to teach the claimed invention of claims 2 and 4. Applicant submits, however, that, even if combined, the alleged combination of references would not teach or suggest each and every feature of the claimed invention.

That is, neither Arisaka nor JP ‘519, nor any combination thereof, teaches or suggests that “*said retaining protruding piece comprising a pawl portion extending from an end of said retaining protruding piece*”, as recited in claim 1.

Indeed, as detailed in section A above, Arisaka fails to teach or suggests this feature.

Furthermore, Applicant respectfully submits that JP '519 fails to make up the deficiencies of Arisaka.

The Examiner attempts to rely on Figures 1-9 of JP '519 to support his allegation. The Examiner, however, is clearly incorrect.

That is, nowhere in these figures (nor anywhere else for that matter) does JP '519 teach or suggest a retaining protruding piece, which extends from a side portion thereof opposite to a protruding portion of the split flange and engages with a corresponding side portion of the shaft portion, formed on the side leg portions, wherein the retaining protruding piece includes a pawl portion extending from an end of the retaining protruding piece.

Indeed, the Examiner does not even allege that JP '519 teaches or suggests this feature. That is, the Examiner merely relies upon JP '519 as teaching a flange portion having stepped portions that are superimposed on top of each other at abutting surfaces of the split flanges.

Furthermore, as discussed in the Application, JP '519 if the clip is delivered as a product in a state that both legs of the latch are open, a user has to close the legs and insert the clip into an attaching hole of a panel while maintaining the closed state. This provides for a complicated operation. It is conceivable to deliver the clip in a temporary closed state. However, if the latch member is twisted through the flange portions, the temporary engagement is easily canceled, so that the retained state cannot be appropriately maintained (see Application at page 3, line 12 through page 4, line 5; paragraphs [0006] and [0007]). This problem of JP '519 is prevented by the retaining protruding piece of the claimed invention of exemplary claim 1.

Thus, JP '519 fails to make-up for the deficiencies of Arisaka.

Therefore, Applicant submits that, even if combined, the alleged combination of

references would not teach or suggest each and every feature of the claimed invention.

Therefore, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

III. FORMAL MATTERS AND CONCLUSION

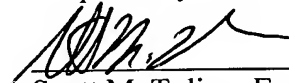
In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that claims 1-20, all the claims presently pending in the application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue at the earliest possible time.

Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in fees or to credit any overpayment in fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

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Respectfully Submitted,



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